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II. — The Year of Caesar's Birth

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HAD the beginning of Suetonius' life of Julius not been lost, we should certainly have had a statement, as in Suetonius' other biographies,¹ of the names of the consuls during whose term of office he was born. In default of that we are, as is well known, compelled to accept a small number of statements (six at the most), giving Caesar's age at various periods of his life, and derive from them the year of his birth.

That he was murdered in his fifty-sixth year is the statement of both Suetonius² and Appian,³ and, as he was born in July and died on the Ides of March, 44 B.C., this would set his birth in July, 100 B.C.

Plutarch (*Caesar*, 69) gives his age at death in the following words: *Θνήσκει δὲ Καῖσαρ τὰ μὲν πάντα γεγωνὸς ἔτη πενήκοντα καὶ ἕξ . . .* This would clearly make him fifty-six years old, *i.e.* in his fifty-seventh year at death, and therefore set his birth in 101 B.C.,⁴ were it not for the words *τὰ πάντα*. When *ὁ πᾶς* is employed with numerals, the meaning 'in all' is added. Two instances of this use appear in Plutarch's life of Pompey (12 and 26), the latter of which describes his overthrow of the pirates *ἡμέραις τεσσαράκοντα ταῖς πάσαις*. In each case the smallness of the number is emphasized, and accordingly a figure is given that is thought to be either strictly accurate or a trifle larger than the exact number. And so in the work *de Viris Illustribus* the same incident is thus described (77, 5): *Mox piratas intra quadragessimum*

¹ Cf. *Aug.* 5, *Tib.* 5, *Cal.* 8, *Claud.* 2, *Nero*, 6 (year clearly indicated by *Tib.* 73), *Galba*, 4, *Otho*, 2, *Vit.* 3, *Vesp.* 2, *Tit.* 2 (year otherwise indicated), and *Dom.* 1.

² Suet. *Iul.* 88: *Periit sexto et quinquagensimo aetatis anno.*

³ Appian, *B.C.* II, 149: *ἐτελεύτησεν, ἔτος ἄγων ἕκτον ἐπὶ πενήκοντα.*

⁴ A. W. Zumpt (*De dictatoris Caesaris die et anno natali*, Berlin, 1874, 11), the Comte de Salis (*Rev. arch., nouv. sér.*, XIV, 1866, 17-22), and T. Rice Holmes (*Caesar's Conquest of Gaul*², 1911, 556) interpret the sentence as meaning that he was fifty-six years old at the time, ignoring the presence of *τὰ πάντα*.

diem subegit. But if Caesar was born in 101 B.C., at the time of his death he had lived fifty-six years plus eight months. This would hardly justify a statement that he had lived at the very utmost fifty-six years. On the other hand, if born in 100 B.C., he had lived fifty-five years and eight months, an age harmonizing exactly with Plutarch's words.

Again, Velleius Paterculus⁵ declares that Caesar was about eighteen years old at the time Sulla secured the mastery. As that occurred late in 82 B.C., Velleius' words would also point to his birth in 100 B.C.⁶

Of Caesar's quaestorship in Spain an incident is narrated, which, whether a "Märchen" or not, should be included in enumerating all indications of his age. At that time (probably 68 B.C.) he came (so Suetonius⁷ tells us) to a statue of Alexander the Great at Gades, and groaned because he had as yet done nothing remarkable at an age at which the Macedonian had already subdued the world. Alexander died in his thirty-third year; if, then, in 68 B.C. Caesar was of the same age, he was born in 100 or 101 B.C., according as the incident occurred after his birthday in July or before it.

As the last bit of direct evidence we have Eutropius' statement that at the battle of Munda (March 17, 45 B.C.) Caesar was fifty-six years old;⁸ in accordance therewith his birth would have to be placed in 102 B.C. But Eutropius is the only authority whose words place Caesar's birth in that year; he is also the very latest of the authorities, living four centuries after Caesar's death; and, moreover, he clearly employed for the life of Caesar not Suetonius, but an author who had used his work,⁹ and in some instances Suetonius'

⁵ Vell. Pat. II, 41, 2: habuissetque fere XVIII annos eo tempore, quo Sulla rerum potitus est.

⁶ And Velleius himself (II, 53, 4) tells us that he considers it worth while to be accurate in the matter of the age of the distinguished men of this period.

⁷ Suet. *Iul.* 7: in aetate, qua iam Alexander orbem terrarum subegisset. Plutarch (*Caes.* 11) places the incident in a somewhat different form in Caesar's praetorship.

⁸ Eut. VI, 24: in quo adeo Caesar paene victus est, ut fugientibus suis se voluerit occidere, ne post tantam rei militaris gloriam in potestatem adulescentium natus annos sex et quinquaginta veniret.

⁹ Paul Ebeling, *Quaestiones Eutropianae*, Halis Saxonium, 1881.

words appear in a garbled form. As, therefore, all the other direct statements either point to his birth in 100 B.C. or are not irreconcilable therewith, if these statements alone were involved there would be no doubt of the acceptance of that date.¹⁰

Indefinite references to Caesar's age are fairly numerous. Inasmuch as the question at issue is as to his birth in 100 B.C. or 102 B.C., there is, to be sure, only a difference in age of two years involved. The following citations (which are arranged in chronological order) of course do not serve as a proof of either date, but the prevalence of allusions to Caesar's youth is very noticeable.

The earliest of all appears in Velleius Paterculus (II, 43, 1): *paene puer a Mario Cinnaque flamen dialis creatus*. As Marius and Cinna were consuls together only in the first days of 86 B.C., the date of this event is apparently settled. The advocates of the earlier date of Caesar's birth point out that if he had been born in July, 100, then in January, 86 he would not yet have been fourteen years old; in other words, he would have been a *puer*, not *paene puer*. This is, however, requiring greater definiteness in the use of the word *puer* than is found elsewhere. As Octavian at the age of nineteen is termed *puer*,¹¹ so at another time *pueritia* might have been loosely taken to end at an age less than fourteen years. In fact, we have such a use in Velleius himself; thus in II, 53, 1, speaking of the young Ptolemy in 48 B.C. when he was thirteen years old,¹² he says: *qui tum puero quam*

¹⁰ The fact that on several coins struck by Caesar presumably at about the beginning of the civil war the number LII is found, is regarded by some as a strong argument for placing his birth in 102 B.C., as it is claimed that this number gives his age at the time. If one investigates, he will find (1) that it is by no means conclusively proved that LII appears on these coins, and (2) that even if LII be accepted as the interpretation of the letters on the coins, the evidence is extremely slight for concluding that this indicates Caesar's age at the time. The matter is succinctly presented by Ernest Babelon in his *Description historique et chronologique des monnaies de la république romaine* (Paris, 1886), II, 18-19.

¹¹ Cic. *ad Att.* XVI, 11, 6, *ad Fam.* XII, 25, 4, and *Phil.* XIII, 11. Cf. also Suet. *Aug.* 63.

¹² Appian, *B.C.* II, 84.

iuveni propior regnabat Alexandriae.¹³ If the thirteen-year-old Ptolemy is spoken of as *puero quam iuveni propior*, may not similarly the thirteen-year-old Caesar be spoken of as *paene puer*? And we must not forget that elsewhere Vel-leius' words clearly point to birth in 100 B.C.

Proceeding with these indefinite statements of his age, we find Plutarch (*Brutus*, 5), when speaking of Caesar's intimacy with Servilia in the period from about 86 B.C. to 63 B.C., terming him *νεανίας*. At the beginning of Sulla's supremacy (about 82 B.C.) the same author (*Caes.* 1) speaks of him as *οὐπω πάνυ μειράκιον*. Sulla deliberated as to killing *παῖδα τηλικούτον* (Plut. *Caes.* 1), and later referred to the many Marii *ἐν τῷ παιδί τούτῳ* (*ib.*). So, too, in Suetonius (*Iul.* 45) Sulla speaks of the *male praecinctum puerum*.

His prosecution of Dolabella occurred in 77 B.C. and his speech in that case gained him fame. His age at that time was 22-23 years (if born in 100 B.C.) or 24-25 years (if born two years earlier). Tacitus (*Dial.* 34, 8), speaking of young men who attained renown as orators, mentions Caesar's prosecution of Dolabella *uno et vicensimo (aetatis anno)*. That age cannot possibly be correct (in the same sentence Tacitus is also wrong as to L. Crassus' age), but the point that he is stressing is the youth of these orators, and a Caesar in his twenty-fifth year would have been quite outside of the group there mentioned; but if in his twenty-third year he would easily belong to it. Of this same time Quintilian (xii, 6, 1) says: *Neque ego annos definiam, cum . . . Calvus, Caesar, Pollio multum ante quaestoriam omnes aetatem gravissima iudicia susceperint, praetextatos egisse quosdam sit traditum . . .*¹⁴

He prosecuted C. Antonius in 76 B.C.; there Asconius (75) called him an *adulescentulus*.¹⁵ When captured by the pirates

¹³ He is termed *puer* in *Caes. B.C.* III, 103, 2; III, 108, 1; III, 112, 12 and Lucan, *Phar.* VIII, 448; yet Orosius (VI, 15, 28) at the very time of Pompey's death calls him *adulescens*.

¹⁴ At the time of this case Ps. Ascon. in Cic. *Div.* 24, p. 110 (ed. Orelli) terms him an *adulescens*.

¹⁵ In the passage *C. Caesar* is the addition of Manutius.

(74 B.C.) he was spoken of by Velleius Paterculus (II, 41, 3) as *admodum iuuenis*, and Valerius Maximus (VI, 9, 15) says the incident occurred *inter primae iuventae initia*. His protection of Masintha (Suet. *Iul.* 71) cannot be dated, but the incident must have happened some time before he set off for Spain as propraetor in 61 B.C.; in connection with it he is spoken of as *iuuenis*.

Later, while Pompey was busy winning victories in the East and Caesar was aedile and praetor, Appian¹⁶ says of the latter: 'Ο δὲ Καῖσαρ ἦν ἔτι νέος. In 63 B.C. Caesar defeated Catulus in the election for the office of *pontifex maximus*; though his age is, to be sure, being compared with that of Catulus, yet it is worth noting that Sallust¹⁷ calls him at that time an *adulescentulus*. Dio Cassius,¹⁸ who is not making such a comparison, says that Caesar yearned for the office *καίτοι καὶ νέος*. Later in that year Plutarch¹⁹ describes him as praetor-elect *τότε δὲ νέος ὦν ἔτι*.

From this date (63 B.C.) there are apparently no references to Caesar's age until we reach the very last years of his life. Dio points out (XLIII, 43, 1) that Caesar still bestowed attention on his appearance *καίπερ παρηβηκώς*. The same author (*ib.* 44, 3) says that the use of the term, *imperator*, was to descend to Caesar's children and grandchildren, *μήτε τέκνον τι αὐτοῦ ἔχοντος καὶ γέροντος ἤδη ὄντος*. In other words, he is termed old with reference to the probability of his still having children. Dio (XLIV, 7, 3) likewise relates that he still had many mistresses *καίπερ πεντηκοντούτης ὦν*.

When Macrobius (*Sat.* II, 2, 5) quotes Symmachus as to Caesar's relations not only with Servilia but also her daughter, Tertia, during the period of the civil war, he is termed *senis adulteri*.

In the same way Lucan (*Phars.* x, 360) calls Caesar *senex*, as compared with the *puer*, Ptolemy.

In short, Caesar is apparently called old in but three passages, one with reference to the probability of having children, one with reference to the young Tertia, and the third

¹⁶ Appian, *B.C.* II, 1.

¹⁸ Dio, xxxvi, 37, 1.

¹⁷ Sallust, *Cat.* 49, 2.

¹⁹ Plut. *Cic.* 20.

with reference to the boy Ptolemy, and all three fall within the last five years of his life.

Let us now turn for a moment to his daughter's age. Caesar (Suet. *Iul.* 1) married Cornelia in his seventeenth year and Julia was born soon after. If he was born in 100 B.C., he married in 84-83 B.C., and Julia was born in 83-82 B.C.; Caesar's birth in 102 B.C. would set each of these dates two years earlier. Julia died in 54 B.C. at the age of 28-29 years (or 30-31 years). But in speaking of her in the years 55 B.C. and 54 B.C. Plutarch thrice (*Pomp.* 53) terms her κόρη.

We have also a few passages wherein Caesar's age is compared with Pompey's; as Pompey was born in 106 B.C., the question in each instance becomes: Is such an expression more in harmony with a difference in age of four years or one of six years?

Thus in Appian (*B.C.* II, 1) we are told: ὁ μὲν δὴ Πομπήιος ἄρτι τὴν θάλασσαν καθήρας ἀπὸ τῶν λησστηρίων τότε μάλιστα πανταχοῦ πλεονασάντων Μιθριδάτην ἐπὶ τοῖς λησταῖς καθηγήκει, Πόντου βασιλέα, καὶ τὴν ἀρχὴν αὐτοῦ, καὶ ὅσα ἄλλα ἔθνη προσέλαβεν ἀμφὶ τὴν ἔω, διετάσσετο· ὁ δὲ Καῖσαρ ἦν ἔτι νέος, δεινὸς εἰπεῖν τε καὶ πράξαι, κ. τ. λ.

Lucan in his *Pharsalia* (I, 129) thus compares the two leaders at the outbreak of the civil war:

nec coiere pares: alter (Pompey) vergentibus annis
in senium.

And again, in II, 559 ff., Pompey says to his soldiers:

Licet ille solutum
defectumque vocet, ne vos mea terreat aetas:
dux sit in his castris senior, dum miles in illis.

And aside from such comparisons with Caesar, there are also numerous passages referring to Pompey as aged,²⁰ in marked contrast with what was found with regard to Caesar.

Cato of Utica was born probably in 95 B.C., Caesar in 100 or 102 B.C. Sallust²¹ thus begins his comparison of the two

²⁰ Cf. Appian, *B.C.* II, 49, Lucan, *Phars.* VII, 352-353, 382; IX, 136-137 and Plut. *Pomp.* 73.

²¹ Sallust, *Cat.* 54, 1.

men: Igitur eis genus, aetas, eloquentia prope aequalia fuere. Once more the year 100 B.C. is the more appropriate.

The definite and the indefinite statements as to Caesar's age, therefore, point clearly to his birth in that year.

As is well known, it was Mommsen²² who called that date into question and proposed 102 B.C., pointing out that if Caesar had been born in 100 B.C., he would have held the three offices of curule aedile, praetor, and consul each two years before the legal age; and he also pointed out that nowhere in our sources is it hinted that an exception was made in Caesar's behalf.

Three paths now lie open to us and, no matter which we pursue, we can only deal with possibilities or, at best, probabilities. We may, in the first place, say with Mommsen that our authorities are incorrect (all save the poorest, Eutropius), deriving the erroneous date perhaps from a common source. Or, in the second place, we may attempt to show that a Roman might legally hold the offices involved two years earlier than is generally accepted.²³ Or, in the third place, we may accept the virtually unanimous statement of our sources and claim a special exemption in Caesar's behalf, though not mentioned in our authorities.²⁴ To set aside the accordant statement of the sources seems impossible. Moreover, modern authorities on the Roman constitution still, with scarcely an exception, accept as the minimum age for the offices of curule aedile, praetor, and consul the thirty-seventh, fortieth, and forty-third year, respectively.²⁵ Accordingly, assuming

²² *Röm. Gesch.*⁸ III, 16 A.

²³ Cf. Karl Nipperdey, "Die Leges annales der römischen Republik," in *Abhdl. der könig. sächs. Gesellsch. d. Wiss.* v (1870), Leipzig, 1-88.

²⁴ That such a dispensation was granted is the belief of Karlowa, *Röm. Rechtsg.* (Leipzig, 1885), I, 183, and Lange, *Röm. Alterth.* (Berlin, 1876), I, 710. See also A. Klotz, *Neue Jahrb.* 1913, 84, and Adolf von Mess, *Caesar: sein Leben, seine Zeit und seine Politik bis zur Begründung seiner Monarchie* (Leipzig, 1913), 171, n. 13. Even Mommsen, *Röm. Staatsr.* (ed. 1887), I, 570, declares that he has no quarrel with those who believe there was a special dispensation in Caesar's behalf, though he still believes that the simplest solution is to place his birth in 102 B.C.

²⁵ Mommsen, *op. cit.* I, 567 ff.; Lange, *op. cit.* I, 709; Herzog, *Gesch. u. Syst. d. röm. Staatsverf.* I, 665-667; Madvig, *Verfass. u. Verwalt. d. röm. Staates*, I, 335 ff., and Botsford, *Roman Assemblies* (1909), 415.

the sources to be correct, we must admit that Caesar held the three offices two years before the legal age.

That, however, dispensations from the various laws as to the magistracies could be granted (*legibus solvi*) is certain, and we see that during this period L. Lucullus, M. Aemilius Scaurus, and M. Caelius Rufus secured exemptions from the requirement of a two years' interval between offices.²⁶ C. Iulius Caesar Vopiscus and Q. Lucretius Ofella strove to omit at least one of the steps in the *cursus honorum*. In 44 B.C. Dolabella became consul in violation of the laws as to the magistracies, and Octavian's consulship was also clearly so. Moreover, in 71 B.C., but five years before Caesar was elected aedile, when Pompey and Crassus were elected consuls, the former had held none of the lower offices of the state, and in the case of the latter there had not been the *biennium* after the praetorship that the law demanded.²⁷ But it is worth noting that Plutarch, in referring to Pompey's candidacy and election, does not make the slightest allusion to any irregularity or special dispensation. Nor does he in the life of Crassus mention the irregularity in his case.

That Caesar was not averse to alterations in the laws in his behalf, or special enactments, his career abundantly illustrates.²⁸

Yet that he should have received three separate dispensations, and that not one should be alluded to in the sources, seem very unlikely. In fact, the failure to mention even two such dispensations seems very strange.

Moreover, that he received a dispensation with reference to age at the time of his candidacy for the consulship in 60 B.C. seems highly improbable. He was indeed asking one dispensation in order that he might obtain the triumph as well; the election was, moreover, hard fought;²⁹ and,

²⁶ Mommsen, *Röm. Staatsr.* I, 536 and 539.

²⁷ Cf. Lange, III, 190-191.

²⁸ Cf. Suet. *Iul.* 11 (the Egyptian appointment), *ib.* 18; Appian, *B.C.* II, 8, and Plut. *Caes.* 13 (the triumph and the candidacy for the consulship), Suet. *Iul.* 28 and 29, and Appian, *B.C.* II, 25 (the candidacy for the second consulship in his absence), and Dio Cass. XXXVII, 37 (the transfer of the election of the pontifex maximus to the people).

²⁹ Suet. *Iul.* 19.

above all, his name would without fail have been cited with those of Pompey and Dolabella to support Octavian's claim for the consulship before the legal age.³⁰

Moreover, do we have any instances of a Roman granted the right of standing for a series of offices before the legal age? In Cicero's *Fifth Philippic*³¹ there is an example and a very striking one. There the orator speaks as follows of the quaestor, Lucius Egnatuleius: Nec vero de L. Egnatuleio, fortissimo et constantissimo civi amicissimoque rei publicae, silendum arbitror; sed tribuendum testimonium virtutis egregiae, quod is legionem quartam ad Caesarem adduxerit, quae praesidio consulibus, senatui populoque Romano reique publicae esset: ob eam causam placere, uti L. Egnatuleio triennio ante legitimum tempus magistratus³² petere, capere, gerere liceat. In quo, patres conscripti, non tantum commodum tribuitur L. Egnatuleio quantus honos: in tali enim re satis est nominari. No elaborate argument based on prior exceptions is made; in fact, the privilege is dismissed lightly as being *non tantum commodum quantus honos*. As an editor of the *Philippics* (John Richard King) comments: "This privilege, Cicero says, was insignificant in itself, but it was a high honor to have gained in it the public thanks of the senate."

Egnatuleius, the quaestor, was therefore allowed to hold the various magistracies each three years before the legal age; one exemption covered all the offices. That Caesar should have received the same kind of exemption seems the most likely solution. It would involve but one dispensation instead of three, and of course the failure to mention one is far more easily accounted for than the failure to mention three; receiving it at this time, *i.e.* before election to the aedileship, he would be at the same stage in the *cursus honorum* as Egnatuleius; and, most important of all, such an exemption so early in his career, when he had held but minor positions in the state, would have been more readily passed over in silence on the part of the historians than

³⁰ Appian, *B.C.* III, 88.

³¹ Cic. *Phil.* v, 52.

³² *magistratus* δ: *magna* V: *magistratum* Halm.

would have been the case when he reached the higher offices.

The question naturally arises : Was Caesar's position before his aedileship such as to make such an exemption seem probable? It will therefore be necessary to sketch his position at this time. His conduct of the quaestorship was evidently conspicuously able ;³³ he left Spain before his term as quaestor was ended — *ad captandas quam primum maiorum rerum occasiones in urbe* ;³⁴ may his aim not have been to secure the offices as soon as possible ?³⁵

In public life Caesar had already allied himself with both Pompey and Crassus. He ardently supported the movement which culminated in their restoration of the tribunician power in 70 B.C.³⁶ The passing of the Gabinian Law of 67 B.C.³⁷ and of the Manilian Law of 66 B.C.,³⁸ both in Pompey's behalf, had Caesar's active aid. With Crassus he kept up both financial and political relations, and it will be recalled that in the so-called *superior coniuratio* of 66 B.C. it is stated that success would have made Crassus *dictator*, and Caesar *magister equitum*.³⁹ But that Caesar did not break with Pompey during this period is shown by his proposal on the first day of his praetorship that the repair of the Capitol be transferred to him.⁴⁰

Moreover, on the completion of his quaestorship⁴¹ Caesar had married Pompeia,⁴² the granddaughter of Sulla, and in view of the political results of his own marriage with Cornelia⁴³ and with Calpurnia,⁴⁴ as well as of that of his own daughter, it may be surmised that this alliance also brought him certain elements of support.

He had been reckoned among Rome's leading advocates

³³ Vell. Pater. II, 43, 4.

³⁴ Suet. *Iul.* 7. Even were the reference to Alexander's statue to be regarded as fabulous, the incident, as far as refers to Caesar's early leaving of the province and his motive in doing so, does not warrant Sihler's dismissal of it as "non-sense" (*Annals of Caesar*, p. 55).

³⁵ Caesar's eagerness for the offices is shown in Dio, xxxvii, 52, 1-2.

³⁶ Suet. *Iul.* 5. ³⁷ Plut. *Pomp.* 25. ³⁸ Dio, xxxvi, 43. ³⁹ Suet. *Iul.* 9.

⁴⁰ Dio, xxxvii, 44, 1 and Suet. *Iul.* 15.

⁴¹ Plut. *Caes.* 5.

⁴² Suet. *Iul.* 6.

⁴³ *Ib.* 1.

⁴⁴ *Ib.* 21 and 22.

from 77 B.C.,⁴⁵ and his lavishness, as Sallust points out in comparing Cato and Caesar,⁴⁶ was one of the most notable of his characteristics. And his greatest asset throughout this period (70–66 B.C.) was the favor of the commons; as Plutarch,⁴⁷ Dio, and Appian point out, it was that at which he was aiming, and which he was actually gaining: it constantly increased until in 63 B.C. it brought about his overwhelming victory in the election for *pontifex maximus*,⁴⁸ and (so Appian declares) made Cicero fear to attack him on the score of his connection with the Catilinarian conspiracy.⁴⁹

The Caesar, therefore, of these years was far more important in the state than either his age or the offices he had held would indicate. In close relations with both Pompey and Crassus, the former of whom he had particularly assisted, connected by marriage with the Sullan faction, an orator of note, and one whose profuse expenditure was conspicuous, he was strong besides in the affections of the commons. Would not an exemption in 67 or 66 B.C., after he had returned from his quaestorship in Spain, and, naturally, before his election as aedile in 66 B.C., seem highly probable?

Besides, at this time occurred an incident, the details of which we have not, that may have affected this very matter. C. Cornelius, an old quaestor⁵⁰ of Pompey's,⁵¹ was tribune in 67 B.C., the very year in which Caesar was supporting the Gabinian Law in Pompey's favor. This rogation of Cornelius proposed to take the power of granting dispensations from the senate, which had gradually usurped it, and to restore it to the people (ne quis nisi per populum legibus solveretur).⁵² There was naturally great objection to the

⁴⁵ Tac. *de Orat.* 34, 8 and Suet. *Iul.* 55. As to the effect of eloquence on one's political career, cf. *Commentariolum de Petit. Cons.* 55.

⁴⁶ Sall. *Cat.* 54. Cf. also Appian, *B.C.* II, 1.

⁴⁷ Cf., e.g., Plut. *Pomp.* 25, Dio, xxxvi, 43 and xxxvii, 22, and Plut. *Caes.* 5.

⁴⁸ Suet. *Iul.* 13.

⁴⁹ Appian, *B.C.* II, 6: Γαίως τε Καῖσαρ οὐ καθαρεύων μὲν ὑπονομία μὴ συνεγνωκέναι τοῖς ἀνδράσι, Κικέρωνος δ' οὐ θαρροῦντος καὶ τότε, ὑπεραρέσκοντα τῷ δήμῳ, ἐς τὸν ἀγῶνα προβάλλεσθαι . . .

⁵⁰ Cf. Cic. *ad Fam.* XIII, 10, 1 and 26, 1.

⁵¹ Asconius, 50 and 54.

⁵² Ascon. 51 and Dio, xxxvi, 39.

proposal on the part of the senatorial leaders, and finally it was modified as follows: *ne quis in senatu legibus solveretur, nisi CC adfuissent, neve quis, cum solutus esset, intercederet, cum de ea re ad populum ferretur.*⁵³

Who was behind this movement, we do not know; but it is to be observed that it aimed at restoring power to the people (of whom Caesar was now becoming a leader), that it was proposed by a tribune of the plebs (an office whose power had been restored but three years before by Pompey and Crassus, supported vigorously by Caesar); and that Cornelius was an *ex-quaestor* of Pompey's, whose advancement Caesar was just at that moment ardently assisting. Caesar must, of course, have received an exemption before the election of aediles in 66 B.C. Is it not at least possible that one of those who stood behind Cornelius' proposal was Caesar, the popular leader, and that he was aiming thereby to place the power of dispensation in the hands of the people, among whom his strength lay? The movement, as at first planned, failed, but a compromise resulted, and, as part of that compromise, may well have been the coveted dispensation for Caesar.

This is, to be sure, pure conjecture; even aside from it, however, that Caesar secured a dispensation during 67 B.C. or early in 66 B.C., allowing him to hold the various offices two years before the legal age, seems the simplest solution of the problem.

⁵³ Ascon. 52 and 64.